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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Ever-present and ever-gracious God, touch the hearts of our lawmakers today with the warmth of Your love and the blessing of Your wisdom. May they develop from the warmth of Your love a civility and respect that will enable them to accomplish Your will on Earth. Empower them to use the blessing of Your wisdom to build a better nation and world. Enlarge their powers with Your strength by infusing their lives with the qualities of character which are needed in these challenging days. Lord, help them to see beyond the baffling and bewildering events of our times, the unfolding of Your loving providence, as they honor their office by striving to please You.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 12, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1323, which is a bill to express the sense of the Senate on shared sacrifice in resolving the budget deficit. The filing deadline for all first-degree amendments to S. 1323 is noon today.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 today for our weekly caucus meetings.

As a reminder to all Senators, last night I filed cloture on S. 1323, which is the matter I just spoke about. I also filed cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2055, which is the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. As a result, there will be up to two rollovers tomorrow morning.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, for more than 2 years now, Republicans in Washington have stood united in the belief that America would never recover from the economic crisis that struck our Nation 3 years ago so long as some in Washington persisted in the mistaken belief that government had the cure. For most clear-eyed observers, that view has found its clearest vindication in the daily drumbeat of news about lost jobs, shuttered businesses, and slumping home values, and in the stories each of us hears from our constituents about the economic hardships they continue to face. If anyone was still looking for proof that the President's economic policies have been a failure, they don't have to look any further than the morning papers or their constituent mail. Indeed, the more the administration insisted on spending and debt as a solution to our problems, the worse those problems became and the more Americans demanded the status quo in Washington had to change. But the administration was slow to get the message.

After an election that any honest observer saw as a repudiation of its policies, the White House continued to cling to its playbook. As concerns about debt and deficit grew, the President presented a budget so unequal to the task that not a single Democrat voted for it—not one. As the Nation inched closer to a potential default, the President focused his attention elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Republicans were offering detailed solutions to the approaching crisis. We offered detailed budgets of our own. We offered to work out a compromise that lowered the debt and protected entitlements from bankruptcy. And here is what we got in return: silence.

That is where the debate over the debt limit came in. If Democrats would not agree on their own to do something about their addiction to spending and

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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debt, then we refused to enable it. If they wanted our votes to increase the debt limit, then they would have to do something to restrain the size and scope of government first. For a while, there weren't many takers. Democrats from the President on down insisted that we simply raise the debt ceiling and endorse the status quo on spending without any reforms.

That changed a couple of months ago when the President agreed to delegate bipartisan debt-reduction talks to the Vice President. Then, a couple of weeks ago, the President broke his own silence on the debt ceiling and got personally involved himself. Incredibly, for those of us who had been calling for action on this issue day-in and day-out for about 2 years, the President tried to put the burden on us. With the Nation edging closer to the debt limit deadline, the President retreated behind the poll-tested rhetoric of class warfare. At a moment when we needed leadership the most, we got it the least. The financial security of the Nation was being gambled on the President's wager that he could convince people our problems would be solved if we would all agree to take it out on the guy in the fancy house down the street. In my view, that was the saddest commentary on the status of leadership at the White House.

I am proud of the fact that Republicans refused to play along. We stood our ground. We know that what Americans need right now is for the government to make job creation easier, not harder, and we said so. At a time when 14 million Americans are looking for work, we refused to support a tax hike. We supported jobs and economic growth instead. When Democrats saw we wouldn't budge, they proposed one last effort to craft a deal. They asked us to join them in another Washington effort to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people. They offered us the opportunity to participate in the kind of deliberate deception of the public that has given public service such a bad name in recent years. We all saw how it worked. The administration carefully leaked to the media, without any details, the idea that it was willing to go along with trillions of dollars in spending cuts. The lack of detail concealed the fact that the savings they were supposedly willing to support were at best smoke and mirrors. The hope here was that the budget gimmicks and deferred decisionmaking they actually supported would have the appearance of serious belt-tightening, but the practical effect would have been at most about a couple of billion dollars in cuts up front with empty promises of more to follow. We have seen this kind of thing before. It is just the kind of sleight-of-hand governing that has put our Nation more than \$14 trillion in debt. I will not associate myself with it, and I refuse to join in an effort to fool the American people.

Republicans have told the President we are not interested in business as

usual in Washington, and we actually mean it. We will not be party to something that claims to save trillions but leaves future generations to pick up the tab and future Congresses to reverse it with a simple vote. We will not pretend a bad deal is a good one, which brings me to a larger point.

The suggestion has been made that this debate was hinged on the question of whether the two parties could find a solution to our economic problems without raising taxes. Wrong. We could have done that without breaking a sweat. The truth is, the Democrats saw this debate as a unique opportunity to impose the types of tax hikes they want so badly but couldn't even pass in a Democrat-controlled Senate last year. So let's not be fooled by a false choice. This was not in the end a debate about whether taxes needed to be raised; it was a debate about the kind of government we want. This was a debate between those who believe Washington doesn't have enough money to spend and those, like me, who believe Washington has become too big, too expensive, and too burdensome already. If one thinks the Federal Government isn't big enough, then the only responsible thing to do is to support higher taxes. For those who are honest about that, I appreciate their candor. But for those of us who don't think the Federal Government should be in charge of banks, the auto industry, the housing business, the student loans business, health care, and regulating everything else under the Sun, we are not about to further enable that model of government by shaking down the American people for more money at a time when they can least afford it. That is what this debate is about. It is about saying Washington has gotten too big, and if it can't afford its commitments, then it needs to find a way to cut back on them. But don't demand that the American people pay more so Washington can make its bad habits permanent. I read an article yesterday that said \$2 out of every \$5 Americans spend right now comes from the Federal Government. Is this really the model we want?

I have a lot of meetings with constituents, and I am not sure I have ever heard anyone say the problem with Washington is they don't have enough money to spend. I don't think I have ever heard that.

It was my hope the two parties could reach a meaningful, bipartisan agreement. I have to say I was initially encouraged by the prospect of the bipartisan discussions led by the Vice President. Although I disagree with him on most issues, Vice President BIDEN is a man I have come to respect as a straight-shooting negotiator. We found common ground last December to prevent a tax hike on the American people, and my hope was we could find a solution once again.

Sadly, these discussions started with the shared goal of reducing the debt but quickly regressed to a public side-

show in which the price of admission became an insistence that we raise taxes on job creators and on millions of American families who don't have yachts or corporate jets. At a time when jobs are few and far between, that is not a price the American people can afford.

So Republicans searched in good faith for common ground, but the goalposts just kept moving. We trudged on, hoping the administration would at some point realize the crisis we face demands a clear change in direction, a departure from the government-driven policies of the past 2 years. But our hopes for a grand bargain eventually ran into the bitter reality that this administration is just not interested in a meaningful and lasting solution to our mounting debt. It is simply too committed to big government. We showed a willingness to sacrifice all along, even as we made it crystal clear from the outset that tax increases would not be a part of any agreement. It was their commitment to big government that stood in the way of a grand bargain. It was their determination to freeze the policies of the past 2 years in place, permanently. The American people don't want that, and Republicans won't be seduced into enabling it.

An ideological commitment to big government has outweighed the White House's commitment to find a meaningful compromise that does not damage our fragile economy in the process. Rather than find a way to bring government back to the people, the administration has committed itself to protecting the size and scope of government at the cost of job creation, economic growth, and America's status in the global economy.

The tragedy in all of this is that we all know what is necessary to solve the economic crisis we face. The answer is to cut spending. The answer is to cut spending.

It is no secret how to solve the entitlement crisis, either. Any one of the people involved in these discussions could write it out on the back of an envelope. It is also no secret that Democrats would rather demagogue any solution Republicans propose in next year's election than join us in seriously reforming them, despite what some Democrats started to say once it became clear Republicans wouldn't agree to a plan that raises taxes.

We all saw the news stories yesterday about how senior Democrats have been worried that reforming Medicare now would make it harder for them to campaign against Republicans later. Evidently, they would rather save their own jobs than save these programs from insolvency.

I truly believed we could get this done. I truly believed, perhaps naively, that this administration would see the necessity of preserving Social Security and Medicare for future generations.

In the end, it appears that the perceived electoral success of demagoguing a solution proved its

undoing. Or perhaps it was the ideological commitment to preserving the size of government by the most stridently liberal Members of the other side. Whatever the reasons, Madam President—whatever the reasons—it is a tragic missed opportunity for the country.

I hope the economists are wrong and that our economy will continue to grow over the next year and a half to buy us time to tackle the problems we face. But after years of discussions and months of negotiations, I have little question that as long as this President is in the Oval Office a real solution is probably unattainable. This was not an easy decision for me.

From my first day as Republican leader in the Senate, I have called on Presidents from both parties to work with Congress on real solutions to the problems we face. For more than 2 years I have had conversations with the administration about working together to accomplish something big for the country. On each occasion, I have been met initially with encouraging words that gradually give way to moving the goalposts.

In the end, they have always expressed a fundamental unwillingness to engage in a meaningful effort to reduce spending as a means to rein in the debt. Despite our stagnant economy, and the dire warnings of economic and security experts that we cannot sustain our mounting debt or unfunded liabilities, this President has proven that he will do almost anything to protect the size and the scope of Washington, DC's burgeoning bureaucracy, including to threaten the economic security of every American by backing us up to the edge of default.

I have heard some on the other side of the aisle suggest that Republicans have put us in this position by refusing to accept what they call a balanced approach.

My response is that if the American people have learned one thing over the past few years, it is that they need to bring their decoder rings to any debate in Washington these days. When Democrats say "investment," they mean government spending. When they say "revenue," they mean higher taxes. And when they say "shared sacrifice," they mean they want you to take the hit, not Washington. It starts with the so-called rich, with the owners of the corporate jets, but pretty soon it hits the family flying in coach. Eventually everyone gets fleeced.

Well, Americans have had enough. They think it is time Washington shares in the sacrifice. Republicans invited Democrats into these discussions about finding a solution to our problems, and while we approached them with clear and unwavering principles, we also brought an open mind. The record reflects that. I will not betray the confidence of those who were willing to negotiate with us, but there can be no question by anyone involved in these discussions that Republicans were willing to make tough choices.

So where do we go from here?

Well, I was one of those who had long hoped we could do something big for the country. But in my view the President has presented us with three choices: smoke and mirrors, tax hikes, or default. Republicans choose none of the above. I had hoped to do good, but I refuse to do harm. So Republicans will choose a path that actually reflects the will of the people, which is to do the responsible thing and ensure the government does not default on its obligations, and to continue to press the administration to rein in Washington, not to freeze it in place.

That is why I will continue to urge the President to rein in our deficits and debt in a way that puts the short- and long-term health of our economy ahead of his personal vision of government. That is what the American people want. That is what Republicans will continue to insist on. Nothing less will solve the crises we face. Nothing less will do.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS LEROY ARTHUR PETRY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I rise today as our Nation honors the bravery and sacrifice of Santa Fe native Leroy Arthur Petry, an Army Ranger who, in 2008, risked his life to save his fellow soldiers on the battlefields of Afghanistan.

Today Sergeant First Class Petry will be honored for his "conspicuous gallantry" with our Nation's highest military decoration: the Medal of Honor.

I will be humbled to be at the White House along with Sergeant First Class

Petry's family, friends, and fellow soldiers as President Obama honors him with the Congressional Medal of Honor.

It will be a special day for Sergeant First Class Petry, for his wife and his children, and all his family, and for his fellow Americans, as he becomes only the second living active-duty servicemember to receive the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Sergeant First Class Petry's story is one of courage and sacrifice and immense love of country. It is a story that began years ago in Santa Fe with a young man who struggled in high school but refused to give up and, instead, buckled down, dug deep, and found the hero within—a hero to the men he saved on that fateful day in Afghanistan, and a hero to all Americans who owe their freedoms to our brave men and women in uniform. It is the story of that day in May of 2008 that I wish to tell you today.

Sergeant First Class Petry was a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment when he and his fellow rangers were deployed to capture a high-value target in Afghanistan. During their raid, they were engaged in a firefight with the enemy when several in their regiment were pinned down by grenades.

Petry had already been wounded by bullet fire, shot through both legs by a hidden enemy. But Petry did not allow his wounds to stop him as the battle raged on. Pinned inside a courtyard with a fellow ranger, he continued the fight, calling in support and creating a brief pause in enemy fire by throwing a grenade their way.

One enemy grenade exploded within 10 yards of Petry and a group of rangers. The explosion knocked the rangers down and wounded two members of the team.

Soon after the first grenade exploded, the insurgents threw a second. This time the grenade landed near two of Petry's comrades. With no thought to his personal safety, Ranger Petry grabbed the grenade and attempted to toss it away. The grenade exploded as he tossed it, taking Petry's hand with it, but saving the lives of those near him.

Losing a hand would have been enough to break most people, but not Sergeant First Class Petry. Instead, he calmly inspected his wound, stemmed the flow of blood with a tourniquet, and continued the fight, helping to pin down the insurgents until they could be killed.

It was this immense act of bravery that saved the lives of his brothers in arms. In fact, one of his fellow rangers, SGT Daniel Higgins, wrote in a statement about that day:

If not for Staff Sergeant Petry's actions, we would have been seriously wounded or killed.

On that fateful day in 2008, then-Staff Sergeant Petry was no stranger to service to his country. He was on his eighth deployment—let me repeat that: his eighth deployment—in support of U.S. operations overseas, his sixth in Afghanistan, after two tours in Iraq.